

CERCOSPORA LEAFSPOT OF CLERODENDRON

E. K. Sobers

An apparently serious leaf spotting disease of *Clerodendron* spp. (Bleeding-heart or Glorybower) is under investigation at the Gainesville Laboratory. This disease is not new to Florida because 23 reports of its occurrence, some dating back to 1955, are a matter of record. However, it has been determined that the causal organism, *Cercospora* sp., is not the same as any of the four previously described on species of *Clerodendron*.

SYMPTOMATOLOGY.—Leaf lesions first appear as dark green, irregular to circular water-soaked areas. These become dark brown and gradually assume the shape and color associated with older lesions. Fully developed lesions are of two types. On young leaves which have not achieved full growth, lesions are irregular to roughly circular, 3-10 mm diameter, dark to light brown, centers depressed, mostly without margins, and usually surrounded by a yellow halo. The centers of these lesions frequently fall out presenting a "shot-hole" appearance.

Lesions on fully developed leaves are circular to subcircular, 0.5-4-0 mm diameter, light brown to tan centers, depressed, with slightly raised brown¹ to reddish-brown margins, and surrounded by a chlorotic halo (Fig. 1). In cases where severe infections have been observed, partial defoliation of the plant is common.



Fig. 1.—Naturally infected leaf of *Clerodendron thomsoniae* Balf. by *Cercospora* sp.

DISTRIBUTION AND PATHOGENICITY.—This disease is found associated with *C. indicum* Kuntz, *C. thomsoniae* Balf. and *C. trichotomum* Thunb. The majority of specimens have been collected along the east coast of the state, although a few have been found at Tampa and Winter Haven.

Pathogenicity studies are incomplete but *C. speciosum* and *C. thomsoniae* are susceptible to the fungus. Other species are yet to be tested and these results will be made available in the near future.

CONTROL.—Data on control experiments have not been fully evaluated. However, significant control has been obtained with monthly applications of a fixed copper at a rate of 2 pounds per 100 gallons of water. It is suggested that affected leaves be removed from all plants and burned. Those leaves which have fallen from the plant should also be removed and destroyed.